

Zechariah

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Zechariah

## Chapter 1

In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, this word of G OD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah son of Iddo: a A clause like "Say to the people" is here understood; cf. 7.5.

G OD was very angry with your ancestors.

Say to them further: Thus said G OD of Hosts: Turn back to me—says G OD of Hosts—and I will turn back to you—said G OD of Hosts.

Do not be like your ancestors! For when the earlier prophets called to them, "Thus said G OD of Hosts: Come, turn back from your evil ways and your evil deeds, they did not obey or give heed to Me—declares G OD.

Where are your ancestors now? And did the prophets live forever?

But the warnings and the decrees with which I charged My servants the prophets overtook your ancestors—did they not?—and in the end they had to admit, 'G OD of Hosts purposed to deal with us according to our ways and our deeds; that is just what has been done to us.'

On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month of the second year of Darius—the month of Shebat—this word of G OD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah son of Iddo:

In the night, I had a vision. I saw a figure, mounted on a bay horse, standing among the myrtles b among the myrtles Septuagint reads "between the mountains"; cf. 6.1. In 6.1ff. four teams of horses leave that abode to roam the four quarters of the earth; in 1.8ff. they are about to reenter God's abode after such a reconnaissance. in the Deep, and behind him were bay, c bay Septuagint adds "dappled"; cf. 6.3. sorrel, d sorrel Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Emendation yields "black"; cf. 6.2. and white horses.

I asked, "What are those, my lord?" And the angel who talked with me answered, "I will let you know what they are."

Then the figure who was standing among the myrtles e among the myrtles See the first note at v. 8. spoke up and said, "These were sent out by G OD to roam the earth."

And in fact, they reported to the angel of G OD who was standing among the myrtles, f among the myrtles See the first note at v. 8. "We have roamed the earth, and have found all the earth dwelling in tranquility." g dwelling in tranquility Upheavals at the start of Darius' reign had encouraged hopes of an early restoration of the Davidic dynasty (cf. Hag. 2.21ff.). Now these hopes were dashed.

Thereupon the angel of G OD exclaimed, "O G OD of Hosts! How long will You withhold pardon from Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, which You placed under a curse seventy years ago?"

G OD

replied with kind, comforting words to the angel who talked with me.

Then the angel who talked with me said to me: "Proclaim! Thus said G OD of Hosts: I am very jealous for Jerusalem—for Zion—

and I am very angry with those nations that are at ease; for I was only angry a little, but they overdid the punishment.

Assuredly, thus said G OD : I graciously return to Jerusalem. My House shall be built in her—declares G OD of Hosts—the measuring line is being applied to Jerusalem.

Proclaim further: Thus said G OD of Hosts: My towns shall yet overflow with bounty. For G OD will again comfort Zion—and will again choose Jerusalem."

## Chapter 2

I looked up, and I saw four horns. a four horns These correspond to the four winds of v. 10.

I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are those?" "Those," he replied, "are the horns that tossed Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

Then G OD showed me four smiths.

"What are they coming to do?" I asked. The angel b The angel Heb. "he." replied: "Those are the horns that tossed Judah, so that nobody at all could raise their head; and these [smiths] have come to throw them into a panic, c to throw them into a panic Meaning of Heb. uncertain; emendation yields "to sharpen ax heads." to hew down d hew down Meaning of Heb. uncertain. the horns of the nations that raise a horn against the land of Judah, to toss it."

I looked up, and I saw a figure holding a measuring line.

"Where are you going?" I asked. "To measure Jerusalem," he replied, "to see how long and wide it is to be."

But the angel who talked with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him.

The former said to him, "Run to that agent e that agent I.e., the measurer or the prophet; intended reference uncertain. and tell him:

"Jerusalem shall be peopled as a city without walls, so many shall be the people and cattle it contains.

And I Myself—declares G OD —will be a wall of fire all around it, and I will be a glory inside it.

"Away, away! Flee from the land of the north—says G OD —though I swept you [there] like the four winds of heaven—declares G OD."

Away, escape, O Zion, you who dwell in Fair Babylon!

For thus said G OD of Hosts—who sent me after glory f who sent me after glory Emendation yields "whose Presence sent me." —concerning the nations that have taken you as spoil: "Whoever touches you touches the pupil of their own g their own According to ancient Jewish tradition, a scribal change for "My." eye.

For I will lift My hand against them, and they shall be spoil for those they enslaved."—Then you shall know that I was sent by G OD of Hosts.

Shout for joy, Fair Zion! For lo, I come; and I will dwell in your midst—declares G OD.

In that day many nations will attach themselves to G OD and become God's h God's Heb. "My." people, and God i God Heb. "I." will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that I was sent to you by G OD of Hosts.

G OD

will claim Judah as a special portion j claim Judah as a special portion Emendation yields "allot to Judah its portion"; cf. Num. 34.17. in the Holy Land—and will choose Jerusalem once more.

Be silent, all flesh, before G OD! For [God] is roused from the holy habitation.

## Chapter 3

I was further shown Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of G OD, and the Accuser a Accuser In contrast to others "Satan." standing at his right to accuse him.

But [the angel of] G OD said to the Accuser, "G OD rebukes you, O Accuser; G OD who has chosen Jerusalem rebukes you! For this is a brand plucked from the fire." b a brand plucked from the fire Joshua's grandfather had been executed by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25.18-21) and his father was exiled (Hag. 1.1; 1 Chron. 5.40-41), but he himself has returned.

Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments when he stood before the angel. The latter spoke up and said to his attendants, "Take the filthy garments off him!" And he said to him, "See, I have removed your guilt from you, and you shall be clothed in [priestly] robes."

Then he c he Heb. "I." gave the order, "Let a pure d pure I.e., ritually pure. diadem be placed on his head." And they placed the pure diadem on his head and clothed him in [priestly] garments, e they placed the pure diadem on his head and clothed him in [priestly] garments Joshua has now been rendered fit to associate with the heavenly beings (v. 7); cf. Isa. 6.6-8. as the angel of G OD stood by.

And the angel of G OD charged Joshua as follows:

"Thus said G OD of Hosts: If you walk in My paths and keep My charge, you in turn will rule My House and guard My courts, and I will permit you to move about among these attendants.

Hearken well, O High Priest Joshua, you and your fellow priests sitting before you! For those men are a sign that f you! For those men are a sign that Or "you—who are men of significance! For." I am going to bring My servant the Branch. g the Branch I.e., the future king of David's line. See 6.12; Jer. 23.5-6; 33.15-16; cf. Isa. 11.1.

For mark well this stone that I place before Joshua, a single stone with seven eyes. h with seven eyes Meaning of Heb. uncertain. The stone apparently symbolizes the God-given power of the future Davidic ruler; see below 4.6-7. I will execute its engraving—declares G OD of Hosts—and I will remove that country's guilt in a single day.

In that day—declares G OD of Hosts—you will be inviting each other to the shade of vines and fig trees."

## Chapter 4

The angel who talked with me came back and woke me as someone is wakened from sleep.

He said to me, "What do you see?" And I answered, "I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl above it. The lamps on it are seven in number, and the lamps above it have a lamps above it have Emendation yields "bowl above it has." seven pipes; and by it are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and one on its left."

I, in turn, asked the angel who talked with me, "What do those things mean, my lord?"

"Do you not know what those things mean?" asked the angel who talked with me; and I said, "No, my lord."

Then he explained to me as follows: b as follows The explanation is given in the last sentence of v. 10. "This is the word of G OD to Zerubbabel: c Zerubbabel A grandson of King Jehoiachin (1 Chron. 3.17-19) and the secular head of the repatriated community (Hag. 1.1; etc.). Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit d by My spirit I.e., Zerubbabel will succeed by means of spiritual gifts conferred upon him by G OD ; cf. Isa. 11.2ff. —said G OD of Hosts.

Whoever you are, O great mountain in the path of Zerubbabel, turn into level ground! For he shall produce that excellent stone; it shall be greeted with shouts of 'Beautiful! Beautiful!'"

And the word of G OD came to me:

"Zerubbabel's hands have founded this House and Zerubbabel's hands shall complete it. Then you shall know that it was G OD of Hosts who sent me to you.

Does anyone scorn a day of small beginnings? When they see the stone of distinction e stone of distinction Meaning of Heb. uncertain; in contrast to others "plummet." in the hand of Zerubbabel, they shall rejoice.

"Those seven are the eyes of G OD, ranging over the whole earth."

"And what," I asked him, "are those two olive trees, one on the right and one on the left of the lampstand?"

And I further asked him, "What are the two tops f tops Meaning of Heb. uncertain; literally "ears" (as of grain). of the olive trees that feed their gold g gold Emendation yields "oil"; cf. v. 14. through those two golden tubes?" h tubes Or "funnels"; through them the oil runs from the olive trees into the bowl of vv. 2 and 3.

He asked me, "Don't you know what they are?" And I replied, "No, my lord."

Then he explained, "They are the two anointed dignitaries i anointed dignitaries I.e., the high priest and the king (cf. 3.8-9 with note); lit. "sons of oil." who attend the Sovereign of all the earth."

## Chapter 5

I looked up again, and I saw a flying scroll.

"What do you see?" he asked. And I replied, "A flying scroll, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide."

"That," he explained to me, "is the curse that goes out over the whole land. For everyone who has stolen, as is forbidden on one side [of the scroll], has gone unpunished; and everyone who has sworn [falsely], as is forbidden on the other side of it, has gone unpunished. a For everyone who has stolen ... and everyone who has sworn ... has gone unpunished Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

[But] I have sent it forth—declares G OD of Hosts—and [the curse] shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name, and it shall lodge inside their houses and shall consume them to the last timber and stone."

Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said, "Now look up and note this other object that is approaching."

I asked, "What is it?" And he said, "This tub b tub Heb. ephah, a measure of capacity. that is approaching—this," said he, "is their eye c eye Septuagint and Syriac read "guilt." in all the land."

And behold, a disk of lead was lifted, revealing a female figure d female figure Apparently a purported goddess or her idol; cf. v. 11. seated inside the tub.

"That," he said, "is Wickedness"; and, thrusting her back inside the tub, he pressed the leaden weight into the tub's mouth.

I looked up again and saw two female figures come soaring with the wind in their wings—they had wings like those of a stork—and carry off the tub between earth and sky.

"Where are they taking the tub?" I asked the angel who talked with me.

And he answered, "To build a shrine for it e it Or "her"; cf. vv. 7-8 and Ibn Ezra. in the land of Shinar; f Shinar I.e., Babylonia; cf. Gen. 10.10; 11.2, 9. [a stand] shall be erected for it, and it g it Or "she"; cf. vv. 7-8. shall be set down there upon the stand."

## Chapter 6

I looked up again, and I saw: Four chariots were coming out from between the two mountains; the mountains were of copper.

The horses of the first chariot were bay, the horses of the second chariot were black;

the horses of the third chariot were white, and the horses of the fourth chariot were spotted-dappled.

And I spoke up and asked the angel who talked with me: "What are those, my lord?"

In reply, the angel said to me, "Those are the four winds of heaven coming out after presenting themselves to the Sovereign of all the earth. The one with the black horses is going out to the region of the north; the white ones have gone out a have gone out Change of vocalization yields "will go out." to what is to the west of them; b what is to the west of them Cf. 'aḥor, "west," Isa. 9.11. Emendation yields "the region of the west." the spotted ones have gone out c have gone out Meaning of Heb. uncertain. to the region of the south; and the dappled ones have gone out... d the dappled ones have gone out... Emendation yields "the bay ones will go out to the region of the east." They were ready to start out and range the earth, and he gave them the order, "Start out and range the earth!" And they ranged the earth. Then he alerted me, and said to me, "Take good note! Those that went out to the region of the north have done my pleasure e done my pleasure Cf. postbiblical naḥath ruah, "gratification." Emendation yields, "done G OD 's pleasure." in the region of the north." f the region of the north I.e., Babylonia, whose communication with Judah was via North Mesopotamia and Syria; cf. 2.10-11.

The word of G OD came to me:

Receive from g from Emendation yields "the gift of." the exiled community—from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon—and you, in turn, proceed the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah.

Take silver and gold and make crowns. Place [one] on the head of High Priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and say to him, "Thus said G OD of Hosts: Behold, a man called the Branch h the Branch See note at 3.8. shall branch out from the place where he is, and he shall build the Temple of G OD.

He shall build the Temple of G OD and shall assume majesty, and he shall sit on his throne and rule. And there shall also be a priest seated on his throne, i seated on his throne Septuagint reads "on his right side." and harmonious understanding shall prevail between them."

The crowns shall remain in the Temple of G OD as a memorial to Helem, j Helem The Syriac version reads "Heldai"; cf. v. 10. Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen k Hen In v. 10, "Josiah." son of Zephaniah.

Peoples from far away shall come and take part in the building of the Temple of G OD, and you shall know that I have been sent to you by G OD of Hosts—if only you will obey the E TERNAL your God!

## Chapter 7

In the fourth year of King Darius, on the fourth day of the ninth month, Kislev, the word of G OD came to Zechariah—when Bethel-sharezer and Regem-melech and his men sent a and Regem-melech and his men sent Emendation yields "sent Regem-melech and his men." to entreat the favor of G OD,

[and] to address this inquiry to the priests of the House of G OD and to the prophets: "Shall I weep and practice abstinence in the fifth month, b weep and practice abstinence in the fifth month Because of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem; cf. 2 Kings 25.8ff. as I have been doing all these years?"

Thereupon the word of G OD of Hosts came to me:

Say to all the people of the land and to the priests: When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and seventh months all these seventy years, did you fast for my benefit?

And when you eat and drink, who but you does the eating, and who but you does the drinking?

Look, this is the message that G OD proclaimed through the earlier prophets, when Jerusalem and the towns about her were peopled and tranquil, when the Negeb and the Shephelah were peopled.

And the word of G OD to Zechariah continued:

Thus said G OD of Hosts: Execute true justice; deal loyally and compassionately with one another.

Do not defraud the widow, the orphan, the stranger, and the poor; and do not plot evil c evil More precisely, "even a hint of evil." against one another.—

But they refused to pay heed. They presented a balky back and turned a deaf ear.

They hardened their hearts like adamant against heeding the instruction and admonition that G OD of Hosts sent to them by divine spirit through the earlier prophets; and a terrible wrath issued from G OD of Hosts. Even as they were called and they would not listen, "So," said G OD of Hosts, "let them call and I will not listen."

I dispersed them among all those nations that they had not known, and the land was left behind them desolate, without any who came and went. They caused a delightful land to be turned into a desolation.

## Chapter 8

The word of G OD of Hosts came [to me]:

Thus said G OD of Hosts: I am very jealous for Zion, I am fiercely jealous for her.

Thus said G OD : I have returned to Zion, and I will dwell in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called the City of Faithfulness, and the mount of G OD of Hosts the Holy Mount.

Thus said G OD of Hosts: There shall yet be elderly men and women in the squares of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the squares of the city shall be crowded with boys and girls playing in the squares.

Thus said G OD of Hosts: Though it will seem impossible to the remnant of this people in those days, shall it also be impossible to Me?—declares G OD of Hosts.

Thus said G OD of Hosts: I will rescue My people from the lands of the east and from the lands of the west, and I will bring them home to dwell in Jerusalem. They shall be My people, and I will be their God—in truth and sincerity.

Thus said G OD of Hosts: Take courage, you who now hear these words that the prophets spoke when the foundations were laid for the rebuilding of the temple, the House of G OD of Hosts.

a Cf. Hag. 1.6. For before that time, the earnings from labor b from labor Lit. "of a person." were nil, and profits from livestock were nothing. It was not safe to go about one's business on account of enemies; and I set every person against someone else.

But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as before—declares G OD of Hosts—

but what it sows shall prosper: The vine shall produce its fruit, the ground shall produce its yield, and the skies shall provide their moisture. I will bestow all these things upon the remnant of this people. And just as you were a curse c a curse I.e., a standard by which people curse; cf. Gen. 12.2 and note; Jer. 24.9. among the nations, O House of Judah and House of Israel, so, when I vindicate you, you shall become a blessing. d a blessing I.e., a standard by which people bless; cf. Gen. 12.2 and note. Have no fear; take courage!

For thus said G OD of Hosts: Just as I planned to afflict you and did not relent when your ancestors provoked Me to anger—said G OD of Hosts—

so, at this time, I have turned and planned to do good to Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. Have no fear!  
 These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to one another, render true and perfect justice in your gates.  
 Not a single one of you shall contrive evil against another; and do not love perjury, because all those are things that I hate—declares G OD.  
 And the word of G OD of Hosts came to me, saying,  
 Thus said G OD of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month, e fast of the fourth month Commemorating the events of 2 Kings 25.3-7 (Jer. 52.6ff.). the fast of the fifth month, f fast of the fifth month Commemorating the events of 2 Kings 25.8-15 (Jer. 52.12ff.). the fast of the seventh month, g fast of the seventh month Commemorating the events of 2 Kings 25.25-26 (Jer. 41). and the fast of the tenth month h fast of the tenth month Commemorating the events of 2 Kings 25.1-2 (Jer. 52.4). shall become occasions for joy and gladness, happy festivals for the House of Judah; but you must love honesty and integrity.  
 Thus said G OD of Hosts: Peoples and the inhabitants of many cities shall yet come—  
 the inhabitants of one shall go to the other and say, "Let us go and entreat the favor of G OD, let us seek G OD of Hosts; I will go, too."  
 The many peoples and the multitude of nations shall come to seek G OD of Hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of G OD.  
 Thus said G OD of Hosts: In those days, ten people from nations of every tongue will take hold—they will take hold of every Jew by a corner of their cloak and say, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

## Chapter 9

A pronouncement: The word of G OD. [God] will reside in the land of Hadrach and Damascus; For mortals will turn their eyes to G OD — Like all the tribes of Israel—  
 Including Hamath, which borders on that land, a that land Of Hadrach and Damascus; Heb. "it." And Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise. Tyre has built herself a fortress; She has amassed silver like dust, And gold like the mud in the streets.  
 But my Sovereign will impoverish her; Her forces shall be defeated at sea, And she herself shall be consumed by fire.  
 Ashkelon shall see it and be frightened, Gaza shall tremble violently, And Ekron, at the collapse of her hopes. Kingship shall vanish from Gaza, Ashkelon shall be without inhabitants,  
 And a mongrel people b a mongrel people Heb. mamzer ; cf. note at Deut. 23.3. shall settle in Ashdod. I will uproot the grandeur of Philistia.  
 But I will clean out the blood from its mouth, And the detestable things from between its teeth. Its survivors, too, shall belong to our God: They shall become like a clan in Judah, And Ekron shall be like the Jebusites. And I will encamp in My House against armies, c against armies Change of vocalization yields "as a garrison." Against any that come and go, And no oppressor shall ever overrun them again; For I have now taken note with My own eyes. d with My own eyes Emendation yields "of their suffering"; cf. 1 Sam. 1.11.  
 Rejoice greatly, Fair Zion; Raise a shout, Fair Jerusalem! Lo, your king is coming to you. He is victorious, triumphant, Yet humble, riding on a donkey, On a jackass foaled by a jenny.  
 He e He Heb. "I." shall banish chariots from Ephraim And horses from Jerusalem; The warrior's bow shall be banished. He shall call on the nations to surrender, f call on the nations to surrender Cf. Deut. 20.10-12 and note. And his rule shall extend from sea to sea And from ocean to land's end.

g Exact meaning and connection of this verse and the next uncertain. You, for your part, have released h released Taking shillaḥti as a second-person singular feminine form, with Septuagint; cf. Judg. 5.7 with note. Your prisoners from the dry pit, i dry pit I.e., a pit that serves as a dungeon rather than a cistern (both are called bor in Heb.). For the sake of the blood of your covenant, [Saying], "Return to Bizzaron, j Bizzaron Perhaps a nickname ("fortress") for Samaria (Heb. Shomeron ). You prisoners of hope." In return [I] announce this day: I will repay you double. For I have drawn Judah taut, And applied [My hand] to Ephraim as to a bow, And I will arouse your sons, O Zion, Against your sons, O Javan, And make you like a warrior's sword. And G OD will be made manifest to Judah, k Judah Heb. "them." With arrows that flash like lightning; My Sovereign G OD shall sound the ram's horn And advance in a stormy tempest. l stormy tempest Lit. "tempests of wind"; for teman in the sense of wind, cf. Job 9.9; 39.26. G OD of Hosts will protect them m The meaning of much of the rest of the chapter is uncertain. With slingstones that devour and conquer; They shall drink, shall rage as with n drink, shall rage as with Some Septuagint mss. read "drink blood like." wine, And be filled [with it] like a dashing bowl, Like the corners of an altar. The E TERNAL their God shall make them prosper On that day, [Pasturing] this covenanted people like sheep. [They shall be] like crown jewels glittering on God's soil. How lovely, how beautiful they shall be, Producing young men like new grain, Young women like new wine!

## Chapter 10

Ask G OD for rain In the season of late rain. a season of late rain Septuagint reads "in its season / The early rain and the late." Cf. Deut. 11.14. It is G OD who causes storms- b storms Meaning of Heb. uncertain. providing rainstorms for them, Grass in the fields for everyone. c for them, / Grass in the fields for everyone Emendation yields "[producing] food for men, / Grass in the fields for cattle." Cf. Deut. 11.14-15. For the oracle idols d oracle idols Figurines, apparently with a human form, used as a medium for divination in household settings; cf. 1 Sam. 15.23; Ezek. 21.26. spoke delusion, The augurs predicted falsely; And dreamers speak lies And console with illusions. That is why My people have strayed e strayed Meaning of Heb. uncertain. like a flock, They suffer f suffer Meaning of Heb. uncertain. for lack of a shepherd. My anger is roused against the shepherds, And I will punish the he-goats. g he-goats I.e., oppressive leaders; cf. Ezek. 34.17ff. For G OD of Hosts has taken thought In behalf of the flock, the House of Judah; They will be made like majestic chargers in battle. From them shall come cornerstones, From them tent pegs, h cornerstones, / From them tent pegs Emendation yields "shields and bucklers." From them bows of combat, And every captain shall also arise from them. And together they shall be like warriors in battle, Tramping in the dirt of the streets; They shall fight, for G OD shall be with them, And they shall put cavalry to shame. I will give victory to the House of Judah, And triumph to the House of Joseph. I will restore them, for I have pardoned them, And they shall be as though I had never disowned them; For I the E TERNAL One am their God, And I will answer their prayers. Ephraim shall be like a warrior, And they i Ephraim shall be like a warrior, / And they Emendation yields "And when Ephraim is victorious, / They..." shall exult as with wine; Their children shall see it and rejoice, They shall exult in G OD.



I will whistle to them and gather them, For I will redeem them; They shall increase and continue increasing. j and continue increasing Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

For though I sowed them among the nations, In the distant places they shall remember Me, They shall escape with their children and shall return.

I will bring them back from the land of Egypt And gather them from Assyria; And I will bring them to the lands of Gilead and Lebanon, And even they shall not suffice for them.

A hemmed-in force shall pass over the sea And shall stir up waves in the sea; k A hemmed-in force ... waves in the sea Meaning of Heb. uncertain. And all the deeps of the Nile shall dry up. Down shall come the pride of Assyria, And the scepter of Egypt shall pass away.

But I will make Judah and Ephraim l Judah and Ephraim Heb. "them"; cf. vv. 6-7. mighty through G OD, And they shall march proudly m march proudly Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Emendation yields "have glory"; cf. Isa. 45.25. in My n My Heb. 3rd person. name -declares G OD.

## Chapter 11

Throw open your gates, O Lebanon, And let fire consume your cedars! Howl, cypresses, for cedars have fallen! How the mighty are ravaged! Howl, you oaks of Bashan, For the stately forest is laid low! Hark, the wailing of the shepherds, For their rich pastures a rich pastures Meaning of Heb. uncertain. are ravaged; Hark, the roaring of the great beasts, For the jungle of the Jordan is ravaged.

Thus said my God the E TERNAL One: Tend the sheep meant for slaughter, whose buyers will slaughter them with impunity, whose seller will say, "Praised be G OD! I'll get rich," and whose shepherd will not pity them. For I will pity the inhabitants of the land no more—declares G OD—but I will place everyone at the mercy of their neighbor and at the mercy of their king; they shall break the country to bits, and I will not rescue it from their hands.

So I tended the sheep meant for slaughter, for those poor ones of the sheep. b for those poor ones of the sheep Emendation yields "for the sheep dealers"; cf. the word rendered "trader" in 14.21. I got two staffs, one of which I named Favor and the other Unity, and I proceeded to tend the sheep.

But I lost the three shepherds c the three shepherds Emendation yields "a third of the flock." in one month; then my patience with them was at an end, and they in turn were disgusted with me.

So I declared, "I am not going to tend you; let the one that is to die die and the one that is to get lost get lost; and let the rest devour each other's flesh!"

Taking my staff Favor, I cleft it in two, so as to annul the covenant I had made with all the peoples; d annul the covenant I had made with all the peoples Perhaps alluding to the prediction of 14.1-3.

and when it was annulled that day, the same poor ones of the sheep e the same poor ones of the sheep Emendation yields "the sheep dealers." who watched f watched Emendation yields "hired." me realized that it was a message from G OD.

Then I said to them, "If you are satisfied, pay me my wages; if not, don't." So they weighed out my wages, thirty shekels of silver—the noble sum that I was worth in their estimation. g the noble sum that I was worth in their estimation Meaning of Heb. uncertain. G OD said to me, "Deposit it in the treasury." h treasury Meaning of Heb. uncertain. And I took the thirty shekels and deposited it in the treasury in the House of G OD.

Then I cleft in two my second staff, Unity, in order to annul the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. i Israel Two mss. of the Septuagint have "Jerusalem"; cf. 12.2-3; 14.14.

G OD

said to me further: Get yourself the gear of a foolish shepherd. For I am going to raise up in the land a shepherd who will neither miss the lost [sheep], nor seek the strayed, j seek the strayed Meaning of Heb. uncertain. nor heal the injured, nor sustain the frail, k sustain the frail Meaning of Heb. uncertain. but will feast on the flesh of the fat ones and tear off their hoofs. l tear off their hoofs Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

Oh, the worthless shepherd Who abandons the flock! Let a sword descend upon his arm And upon his right eye! His arm shall shrivel up; His right eye shall go blind.

## Chapter 12

A pronouncement: The word of G OD concerning Israel. The utterance of G OD, Who stretched out the skies And made firm the earth, And created mortals' breath within them:

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a bowl of reeling for the peoples all around. Judah shall be caught up in the siege upon Jerusalem, when all the nations of the earth gather against her. In that day, I will make Jerusalem a stone for all the peoples to lift; all who lift it shall injure themselves.

In that day—declares G OD —I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness. But I will watch over the House of Judah while I strike every horse of a watch over the House of Judah while I strike every horse of Emendation yields "open the eyes of Judah while I strike all." the peoples with blindness.

And the clans of Judah will say to themselves, "The dwellers of Jerusalem are a task set for us by b The dwellers of Jerusalem are a task set for us by Emendation yields "We will save the dwellers of Jerusalem with the help of." their God, G OD of Hosts."

In that day, I will make the clans of Judah like a flaming brazier among sticks and like a flaming torch among sheaves. They shall devour all the besieging peoples right and left; and Jerusalem shall continue on its site, in Jerusalem. c Jerusalem Emendation yields "safety."

G OD

will give victory to the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the House of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be too great for Judah.

In that day, G OD will shield the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and the feeblest of them shall be in that day like David, and the House of David like a divine being—like an angel of G OD —at their head.

In that day I will all but annihilate d all but annihilate For the idiom cf. Gen. 43.30; it is also attested in postbiblical Hebrew. all the nations that came up against Jerusalem.

But I will fill the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem with a spirit of pity and compassion; and they shall lament e lament Meaning of Heb. uncertain. to Me about those who are slain, wailing over them as over a favorite son and showing bitter grief as over a first-born.

In that day, the wailing in Jerusalem shall be as great as the wailing at Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddon. f Megiddon Usually "Megiddo."

The land shall wail, each family by itself: The family of the House of David by themselves, and their womenfolk by themselves; the family of the House of Nathan by themselves, and their womenfolk by themselves; the family of the House of Levi by themselves, and their womenfolk by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by themselves, and their womenfolk by themselves;

and all the other families, every family by itself, with their womenfolk by themselves. g In this way, apparently, they will prevail upon G OD to spare the remnant of the besieging nations; cf. v. 10.

### Chapter 13

In that day a fountain shall be open to the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for purging and lustration. a lustration Lit. "for impurity"; cf. Num. 19.9.

In that day, too—declares G OD of Hosts—I will erase the very names of the idols from the land; they shall not be uttered anymore. And I will also make the "prophets" and the impure spirit b impure spirit To which abnormal human behavior was attributed. vanish from the land.

If some man "prophecies" thereafter, his own father and mother, who brought him into the world, will say to him, "You shall die, for you have lied in the name of G OD "; and his own father and mother, who brought him into the world, will put him to death when he "prophecies."

In that day, every such "prophet" will be ashamed of the "visions" [he had] when he "prophecied." In order to deceive, he c he Heb. "they." will not wear a hairy mantle, d wear a hairy mantle In imitation of Elijah; cf. 2 Kings 1.8.

and he will declare, "I am not a 'prophet'; I am a tiller of the soil; e I am a tiller of the soil I.e., I was addicted to wine like Noah, the tiller of the soil (cf. Gen. 9.20-21), hence my hallucinations and ravings; cf. Prov. 23.33. you see, I was plied with the red stuff f I was plied with the red stuff Connecting 'adam with 'adom "red" (cf. Prov. 23.31); but meaning of Heb. uncertain. from my youth on."

And if he is asked, "What are those sores on your back?" g sores on your back Lit. "sores between your arms"; cf. 2 Kings 9.24. Sores are sometimes symptoms of hysteria. he will reply, "From being beaten in the homes of my friends." h beaten in the homes of my friends Presumably for making drunken scenes; cf. Prov. 23.35.

i Verses 7-9 would read well after 11.17. O sword! Rouse yourself against My shepherd, The man in charge of My flock j in charge of My flock Meaning of Heb. uncertain. —says G OD of Hosts. Strike down the shepherd And let the flock scatter; And I will also turn My hand Against all the shepherd boys.

Throughout the land —declares G OD — Two-thirds shall perish, shall die, And one-third of it shall survive.

That third I will put into the fire, And I will smelt them as one smelts silver And test them as one tests gold. They will invoke Me by name, And I will respond to them. I will declare, "You are My people," And they will declare, " The E TERNAL is our God!"

### Chapter 14

Lo, a day of G OD is coming when your a your Jerusalem is addressed. spoil shall be divided in your very midst!

For I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem for war: The city shall be captured, the houses plundered, and the women violated; and a part of the city shall go into exile. But the rest of the population shall not be uprooted from the city.

Then G OD will come forth and make war on those nations as a fighter makes war on a day of battle.

On that day, God's feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall split across from east to west, and one part of the Mount shall shift to the north and the other to the south, a huge gorge.

b Vocalizing the repeated verb as (we-)nistam with Targum, Septuagint, and an old Heb. ms. Other mss. and printed editions read "You [pl.] shall

flee [to] the Valley in the Hills, for the Valley of the Hills shall reach up to Azal. You shall flee as you fled because of the earthquake...." And the Valley in the Hills shall be stopped up, for the Valley of the Hills shall reach only to Azal; it shall be stopped up as it was stopped up as a result of the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah.—And the ETERNAL my God, with all the holy beings, will come to you.

c Meaning of verse uncertain; cf. Job 21.26. In that day, there shall be neither sunlight nor cold moonlight,

but there shall be a continuous day—only G OD knows when—of neither day nor night, and there shall be light at eventide.

In that day, fresh water shall flow from Jerusalem, part of it to the Eastern Sea d the Eastern Sea I.e., the Dead Sea; cf. Joel 2.20. and part to the Western Sea, e the Western Sea I.e., the Mediterranean Sea; cf. Joel 2.20. throughout the summer and winter.

And G OD shall be sovereign over all the earth; in that day there shall be one G OD with one name. f one G OD with one name I.e., G OD alone shall be worshiped—and shall be invoked by that name only.

Then the whole country shall become like the Arabah, g like the Arabah I.e., depressed like the Jordan Valley. from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. h from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem I.e., from the northern border of the Kingdom of Judah (1 Kings 15.22; 2 Kings 23.8) to the southern border (Josh. 15.32; 19.7). The latter, however, shall perch high up where it is, and shall be inhabited i shall be inhabited Moved up from v. 11 for clarity. from the Gate of Benjamin to the site of the Old Gate, down to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.

Never again shall destruction be decreed, and Jerusalem shall dwell secure.

As for those peoples that warred against Jerusalem, G OD will smite them with this plague: Their flesh shall rot away while they stand on their feet; their eyes shall rot away in their sockets; and their tongues shall rot away in their mouths.

In that day, a great panic from G OD shall fall upon them, and everyone shall snatch at the hand of another, and everyone shall raise their hand against everyone else's hand.

Judah shall join the fighting in Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the nations round about—vast quantities of gold, silver, and clothing—shall be gathered in.

The same plague shall strike the horses, the mules, the camels, and the donkeys; the plague shall affect all the animals in those camps.

All who survive of all those nations that came up against Jerusalem shall make a pilgrimage year by year to bow low to the Supreme G OD of Hosts and to observe the Feast of Booths.

Any of the earth's communities that does not make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to bow low to the Supreme G OD of Hosts shall receive no rain. However, if the community of Egypt does not make this pilgrimage, it shall not be visited by the same affliction with which G OD will strike the other nations that do not come up to observe the Feast of Booths. j Because Egypt is not dependent on rain, it will suffer some other punishment, presumably that described in v. 12.

Such shall be the punishment of Egypt and of all other nations that do not come up to observe the Feast of Booths.

In that day, even the bells on the horses shall be inscribed "Holy to G OD." The metal pots in the House of G OD shall be like the basins before the altar;

indeed, every metal pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy to G OD of Hosts. And all those who sacrifice shall come and take of these to boil [their sacrificial meat] in; in that day there shall be no more traders k traders To sell ritually pure vessels. in the House of G OD of Hosts.